

# Children and discipline

## Discussion

Work in pairs. Make a list of ways in which parents and teachers discipline children. For each punishment on the list discuss the following questions:

1. Is this a reasonable punishment to give a child in a civilised society?
2. What age of child is it suitable for?
3. Who can give this punishment to a child? Parents? Teachers? Other relatives?

## Reading

Read these two letters. Which one do you agree most with? Why?

Dear Sir

I think it is quite ridiculous that the government should be considering legislation to ban smacking. Every parent needs the right to be able to give a child a smack, not in order to cause physical harm or pain, but more as a shock tactic to stop a child from misbehaving or in some circumstances to stop them causing damage to themselves or other people. Some people argue that laws are needed to stop excessive physical punishment, but there are quite clear laws dealing with assault and bodily harm. If a parent causes physical harm to a child, then the police can use these laws to bring the parent to justice. My father used to give me the slipper and it never did me any harm. What is all the fuss about?

Jack Wallace

Dear Sir

Thank goodness the government has finally begun to see sense regarding the punishment of children! Let us hope that they have the courage to do away with the physical punishment of children. We supposedly live in a civilised society. Can we at last realise that physical punishment is unreasonable, degrading, mentally harmful and completely unacceptable in the 21st century? Smacking, indeed any form of physical punishment, should be made illegal immediately, and parents and teachers who practise this disgraceful activity should be brought before the courts.

Laura Flynn

Make four true sentences:

Jack Wallace

Laura Flynn

would like to see all physical punishment banned.  
thinks the laws are acceptable as they are now.  
thinks smacking has more than a physical effect.  
was smacked as a child.

## Discussion

Work in small groups. Discuss these statements:

'An adult hitting a child of any age is not right and there are much better ways to discipline children.'

'Children should have the same rights as adults. Adults cannot hit other adults, so they should not be allowed to hit children either.'

Do you agree or not? Why?

Are there other, better ways of disciplining children?